

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6966

AMEMBASSY MANILA

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

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CINCPAC

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SUBJ: EDITORIAL ON NEUTRALIZATION

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 4299

1. THE FOLLOWING IS AN EDITORIAL WHICH APPEARED IN THE
SEPTEMBER 28 "NATION" DISCUSSING AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN'S
RECENT MANILA SPEECH ON NEUTRALIZATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

2. BEGIN TEXT: THE KUALA LUMPUR DECLARATION OF PEACE,
FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY SIGNED BY THE FIVE MEMBERS OF THE
ASEAN COMMUNITY HAD ONE BASIC FLAW IN IT AND IT IS BE-
GINNING TO CATCH UP. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THE FIVE
MEMBER NATIONS -- PHILIPPINES, INDONESIA, MALAYSIA,
THAILAND AND SINGAPORE -- ATTEMPTED TO ACHIEVE
SOMETHING WHICH IS NOT WITHIN THEIR OWN CAPABILITY.

ACCORDING TO THE DECLARATION SIGNED IN NOVEMBER 1971,
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THE NEUTRALIZATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIA -- TO START WITH THE

ASEAN COUNTRIES -- SHOULD BE GUARANTEED BY THE UNITED STATES, SOVIET UNION AND CHINA. THE DECLARATION ITSELF DOES NOT SPECIFY IT BUT IT IS IMPLICIT THAT EVEN IF ONE OF THE BIG POWERS IS COOL TO THE IDEA, THEN THE WHOLE EXERCISE BECOMES ONE OF FUTILITY.

BUT SOMEHOW THERE WAS A FOND HOPE THAT THE THREE POWERS WILL JUMP AT THE IDEA OF A NEUTRALIZED SOUTHEAST ASIA AND MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER TUN ABDUL RAZAK EVEN HAD THE DREAM OF INCLUDING BURMA AND THE FOUR COUNTRIES OF INDOCHINA. ALMOST TWO YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE DECLARATION WAS SIGNED AND THE ATTITUDE OF THE BIG POWERS IS GRADUALLY BECOMING CLEARER.

PEKING HAS VOICED TOKEN SUPPORT BUT HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT SHE IS NOT GOING TO MOVE IN ADVANCE OF THE OTHER TWO BIG POWERS. THE SOVIET UNION HAS NOT BOTHERED TO MAKE ANY PUBLIC OR AUTHORITATIVE MENTION ABOUT THE NEUTRALIZATION CONCEPT BUT HAS BEGUN WRESTLING MORE SERIOUSLY ABOUT HER OWN IDEA OF ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY, WHICH FOR ALL APPARENT REASONS COULD ONLY MEAN THAT MOSCOW WOULD LIKE TO SEE ASIA UNDER SOVIET HEGEMONY.

THE SURPRISE FACTOR, OF COURSE, IS THE UNITED STATES WHICH UNTIL RECENTLY MADE NO OFFICIAL COMMENT. A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO, WILLIAM SULLIVAN, A VETERAN ASIA HAND AND CURRENTLY US AMBASSADOR TO THE PHILIPPINES, SOMEWHAT COOLLY DISMISSED THE NEUTRALIZATION CONCEPT AS "NOT ONLY PREMATURE BUT PERHAPS IDEALISTIC" -- AN ATTITUDE WHICH THIS NEWSPAPER HAS CONSISTENTLY ADVOCATED EVER SINCE RAZAK STARTED STEAM-ROLLING THE IDEA THROUGH AN ASEAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE.

WHEN SULLIVAN SAID IN MANILA, "NEUTRALIZATION IN A PASSIVE SENSE DOES NOT LOOK TO ME TO BE AN IDEAL PRESCRIPTION FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA," IT IS OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE SINCE IT MEANS THAT THE UNITED STATES IS NOT GOING TO RATIFY, AT LEAST IN THE NEAR FUTURE, THE KUALA LUMPUR DECLARATION. WHILE THE SOVIET UNION HAS KEPT MUM AND CHINA HAS SHOWN TACIT ACCEPTANCE, THE UNITED STATES ATTITUDE, AS EXPRESSED BY SULLIVAN, SEEMS TO HAVE EFFECTIVELY KILLED THE IDEA.

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THIS MAY BE A GREAT PERSONAL LOSS TO RAZAK WHO, ALONG WITH MEMBERS OF HIS GOVERNMENT, HAVE TOUTED THIS IDEA AT EVERY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE BUT EVEN HE MUST AGREE TO THE BASIC FLAW IN THE WHOLE CONCEPT. NOW THAT WE CANNOT WAVE THE MAGIC WAND OF NEUTRALIZATION ANY MORE TO ACHIEVE SECURITY FOR THE SMALLER NATIONS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND SINCE WE MAY HAVE TO SHELVE THE KUALA LUMPUR

DECLARATION, SOME BASIC AND REALISTIC THINKING HAS TO BE DONE.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS ARE STILL NOT THINKING ABOUT THE POLITICS OF DETENTE, THE POLITICS OF CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE COMMUNIST GIANTS, AND THE WAY JAPAN AND THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY ARE TRYING TO USE ECONOMIC POWER TO WIN GREATER AND GREATER INFLUENCE.

THERE ARE MANY POLITICAL THEORISTS AND EVEN SOME SOUTHEASTASIAN LEADERS WHO BELIEVE THAT, AS THE WAR IN INDOCHINA SETTLES DOWN AND AS THE US REDUCES HER ROLE IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD, THE OTHER BIG BOYS -- MILITARILY OR ECONOMICALLY IN THE SUPERCLASS -- WILL SOMEHOW ACHIEVE A BALANCE OF POWER IN WHICH WE WILL FIND OUR SECURITY.

BUT AGAIN THE BASIC FLAW CREEPS IN -- WE SMALL NATIONS ARE NOT IN CHARGE OF OUR OWN SECURITY BUT ARE DEPENDENT UPON BIG BOYS TO ACHIEVE A BALANCE WHICH WILL OF COURSE BE IN THEIR TERMS.

ASEAN MEMBERS, NOW THAT THEY KNOW THAT THE KUALA LUMPUR DECLARATION HAS PRACTICALLY FIZZLED OUT, SHOULD TAKE A SECOND LOOK AND WORRY MORE ABOUT INTERNAL SECURITY. COLLECTIVELY AND INDIVIDUALLY. UNTIL OUR STRENGTH COMES FROM INSIDE OUR OWN COUNTRIES, WHICH IN TURN MEANS THAT OUR GOVERNMENTS BECOME BROAD-BASED WITH ROOTS GOING TO ALL THE PEOPLE, IT WILL BE REALISTIC TO RECOGNIZE THAT WE MIGHT BE PUSHED AROUND BY THE BIG POWERS FOR SOME-TIME TO COME UNTIL WE REALIZE THE NEW LINE-UPS THAT ARE DEVELOPING. END TEXT.
MASTERS

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